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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 012846

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#) [VE](#) [BR](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: DAS SHAPIRO AND PDAS FARRAR MEET WITH PRESIDENT
URIBE

REF: BOGOTA 12512

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) December 15, 2004, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Presidential
Palace, Bogota.

[1](#)2. (U) Participants:

U.S.

WHA DAS Charles Shapiro
INL PDAS Jonathan Farrar
Ambassador William B. Wood
David Henifin, WHA/AND Deputy Director
Al Matano, INL/LP Deputy Director
Craig Conway, POL (notetaker)

Colombia

President Alvaro Uribe
Jaime Bermudez, Presidential Communications Director
Francisco Gonzalez, MFA Americas Division (notetaker)

Summary

[1](#)3. (C) WHA DAS Shapiro, INL PDAS Farrar, and Ambassador Wood
called on President Uribe on December 15. Uribe expressed
gratitude for U.S. counternarcotics and counterterrorism
assistance, but shared his concern that record levels of
seizures and eradications have not had an effect on prices in
Europe and the U.S. Uribe noted that Colombia's illegal
armed groups have been seriously weakened by GOC military
pressure and, like the paramilitaries, both the FARC and the
ELN will opt for peaceful negotiations within the next five
years. Uribe stressed the importance of human rights in GOC
policies and pledged to continue dialogue with NGOs. He also
promised to review key human rights cases, including
Guaitarilla, Cajamarca, and Mapiripan, with the MOD. Uribe
agreed to clarify the GOC's positions and implementation
plans for demobilization by presenting a series of key points
to the international community. Uribe commented on his
difficult position with regard to Venezuela and Brazil and
promised to look into Colombia's voting position on human
rights in the UN. Despite the Supreme Court's wait-and-see
attitude on extraditions, Uribe affirmed his full support for
continued extraditions. End Summary.

Counternarcotics

[1](#)4. (C) President Uribe expressed appreciation for U.S.
assistance, noting that without U.S. support Colombia would
not have the ability to fight guerrilla or paramilitary
groups, both of which are financed by narcotics trafficking.
Farrar thanked Uribe for his Government's efforts against
illegal armed groups and pledged continued support for
counternarcotics efforts. Uribe asked Farrar for the USG's
assessment of counternarcotics programs in Colombia and
expressed concern that, although seizures and crop
eradication figures are at record high levels, the price of
cocaine has not increased. Uribe noted that a failure to
show results would lead to greater pressure for legalization
or funding cuts. Wood observed that there is not enough data
on actual narcotics supply in the U.S. or quantities of
narcotics in the "pipeline," which limits our ability to
explain the lack of tangible results on the streets of the
U.S.

Prospects for Success

[1](#)5. (C) In response to a question, Uribe said Colombia's
illegal armed groups cannot resist an additional five years
of military pressure. Refusing to promise concrete dates and
noting the importance of being a realist, Uribe pledged to
continue to pressure illegal armed groups. Paramilitaries
are not negotiating simply because they want peace, but

because of the military pressure the Government has applied and their fear of extradition to the U.S. Uribe speculated that splinter groups of narcotrafficking organizations will follow in the wake of the paramilitaries and observed that destroying those groups will require a military solution. Uribe said that the ELN has been significantly weakened and is seeking a political solution. Uribe estimated the FARC have lost about 40 percent of their military capacity and had only a limited capacity to recruit new members. Uribe speculated that the FARC might begin to negotiate if he wins re-election, but added he would continue to caution the public to not expect quick results. DAS Shapiro told Uribe the U.S. would continue to support the GOC's efforts. Uribe agreed on the importance of sustaining efforts to improve security and increase public confidence in Government institutions.

Coordination and Advances

16. (C) Uribe noted that cooperation with the U.S. has been extraordinary, citing several recent captures of guerrilla leaders, including the FARC's "Foreign Minister," Rodrigo Granda Escobar (septel). Shapiro said he had been impressed with USG-GOC coordination during his visit to San Jose de Guaviare and congratulated Uribe on his efforts to increase the state's presence throughout the country. Uribe said he had observed a greater commitment from the armed forces to address corruption and collusion with paramilitaries. He also noted that the number of allegations of collusion continues to drop.

Human Rights

17. (C) Shapiro stressed the importance of continued work on human rights. Uribe reaffirmed his commitment to human rights, noting the central role they play in his efforts. Shapiro noted the importance of continued dialogue with NGOs. Uribe acknowledged the tense nature of many of his discussions with NGOs, but agreed continued dialogue is important. The Ambassador recognized improvements on human rights, but stressed the importance of progress on several key human rights cases that are followed carefully by Congress and NGOs, including Guaitarilla, Cajamarca, and Mapiripan. Wood stressed the importance of a transparent, public judicial investigation with effective results, adding that an internal disciplinary process was not sufficient. Uribe agreed to review the cases with the MOD.

18. (C) On Mapiripan, Farrar said that Fiscalia pressure on Orozco and the persistence of unresolved human rights cases impede the Administration's efforts with Congress. Uribe stressed he only has the ability to guarantee military justice, noting that Colombia's judicial system is independent of the executive branch. Uribe noted that the latest generals' promotion list contained no individuals accused of human rights abuses or collusion. Wood expressed U.S. interest in General Avila's dismissal, stating that it was not sufficient simply to remove him from command and reassign him. Wood stressed the importance of thorough investigations of all allegations. Uribe asked if there was direct evidence implicating Avila. Uribe agreed that Avila would have to be retired if there was sufficient evidence against him, but cautioned that the Government cannot dismiss an officer on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations. Uribe promised to follow up with the MOD.

Paramilitary Demobilization

19. (C) Shapiro and Wood encouraged Uribe to be more active in communicating the GOC's position on the Law for Justice and Reparations, noting that the GOC's silence had allowed their opponents to frame the debate and created confusion in Washington and European capitals. Uribe stressed the importance of balancing peace and justice, but added that the GOC was slowly resolving differences with members of the opposition in Congress. He also stressed that the legislation would apply to paramilitaries and guerrillas equally, noting that many guerrillas would not agree to the lengthy prison sentences included in the opposition's draft legislation. Uribe agreed that the GOC would draft a series of key points, including criteria and an implementation process, to present to the international community in order to clarify the GOC's position.

Venezuela and Brazil

10. (C) Uribe said he had discussed Chavez with President Bush in Cartagena. He discussed the difficulties of maintaining a workable relationship with Chavez. The absence

of evidence proving that Chavez stole the elections and Chavez's private assertion that he has no relationship with the FARC or narcotraffickers makes it difficult to condemn him publicly, despite Uribe's private distrust of Chavez and his belief that Chavez may be helping the FARC and narcotics traffickers. In bilateral meetings, Uribe's criticisms have focused on Chavez's failure to take action against narcotraffickers. Uribe also told Chavez in Cuzco that he is not helping himself by taking a confrontational position with the U.S. On Brazil, Uribe said his relationship with Lula is complicated by Lula's effort to build an anti-U.S. alliance in Latin America. Lula is more practical and intelligent than Chavez, but is driven by his leftist background and Brazilian "imperial spirit" to oppose the U.S. Uribe has little influence with either Lula or Chavez because they see him as a friend of the U.S. Uribe said he would continue to press Chavez to take action against narcotraffickers and noted that Lula has not followed through on promises to fight narcotics trafficking.

OAS Secretary General

11. (C) Shapiro pressed Colombia to strengthen its support for former President of El Salvador Flores for Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). Uribe said the GOC supported his candidacy, but cautioned that Flores would have to ratchet up his campaign. (Mexican Foreign Minister Derbez, presumably visiting to advocate his own candidacy, was the next visitor on Uribe's schedule.)

UN Human Rights Votes

12. (C) Shapiro said he did not understand the GOC's abstentions on key human rights votes in the UN involving Cuba, Zimbabwe and Sudan. In particular, he asked the President to oppose possible upcoming no-action motions in the UNGA plenary on Iran and Turkmenistan. Uribe promised to review the matter with the MFA.

Extradition

13. (C) In response to a question on extradition, Uribe explained that the Supreme Court of Justice had taken a wait-and-see position in the wake of a statement -- and despite the later retraction of this statement -- by the U.S. Attorney in Miami that Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela would be tried for acts committed during the past 20 years, contrary to USG assurances that he would not be tried for acts committed before 1997 (reftel). Uribe affirmed his commitment to extradition and expressed confidence that the matter would be resolved in the near future.

14. (U) This cable has been cleared by DAS Shapiro.
WOOD